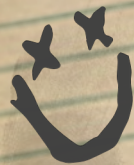


Statio Numero  
The Final Chapter  
of the Liminal Cycle

Written by  
**JOSEPH MATHENY**

Illustrated by  
**JASON NUNES**

Statio Numero  
a Mind Movie



Written by Joseph Matheny  
Illustrated by Jason Nunes

**First Draft**

3/11/2022

Dedicated to the memory of Kerry Wendell Thornley

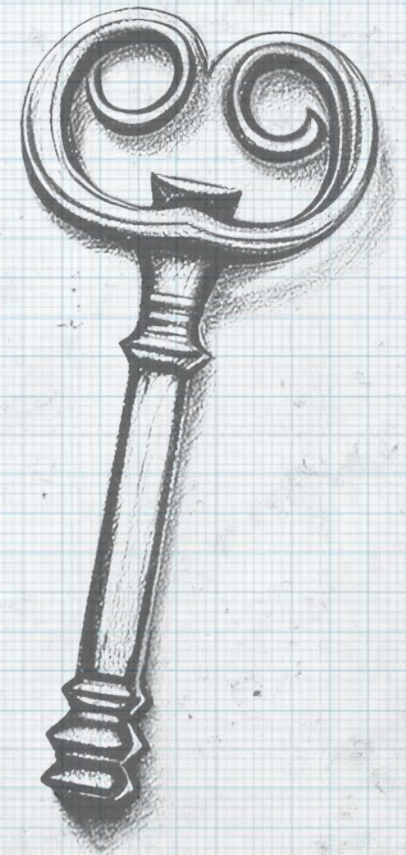
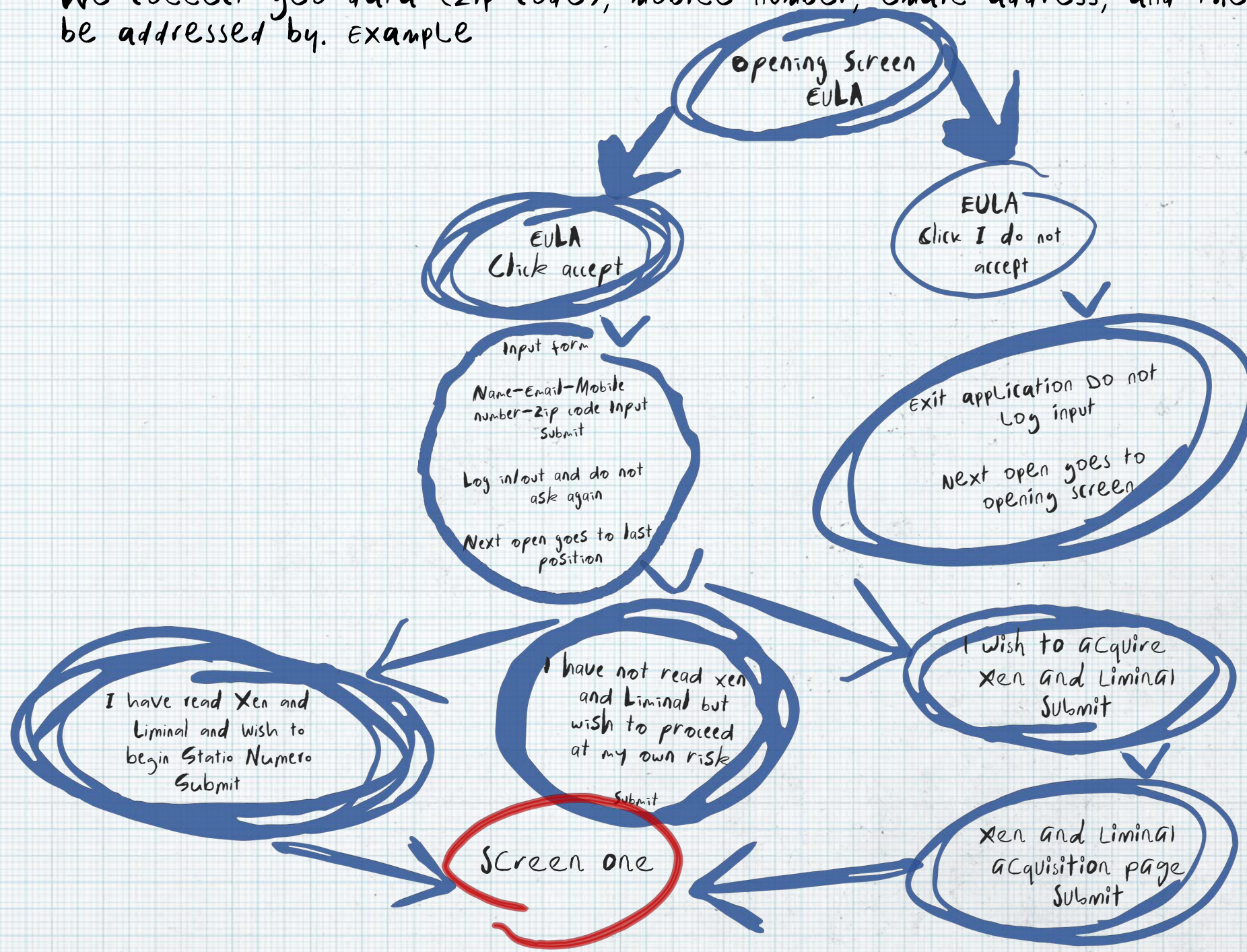
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users sign up for the experience via a responsive web interface (desktop, mobile, compliant)

We save the last place accessed but allow the experiencers to move ahead or move back to whatever spots they wish. This story is nonlinear. We refer to the users as "experiencers."

We encrypt their data and never sell or use it for anything other than this experience. When they have completed the experience, they are presented with the opportunity to delete their data. We do not keep a copy.

We collect geo data (zip code), mobile number, email address, and the name they wish to be addressed by. Example



Upon completion of registration, we go to:

opening

Format: Animation

Large white text  
on a black screen

We see the following series of statements scroll by, each one stopping long enough for someone to read it. The order of these screens is random.



## Screen one

Ankoku ~~Yam~~ Butoh — the dance of utter darkness. Because it arose in the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is tempting to think of this dance form as one of grief and despair. It is that. But Kazuo Ohno, one of the early dancers, reminds us to look beyond our western ways of thinking about the dark: darkness in butoh refers to our unconscious, to that which is hidden from our awareness.

— Lori Michelle Wells, *That Third Thing*, Dark Mountain, Issue 17, Spring 2020

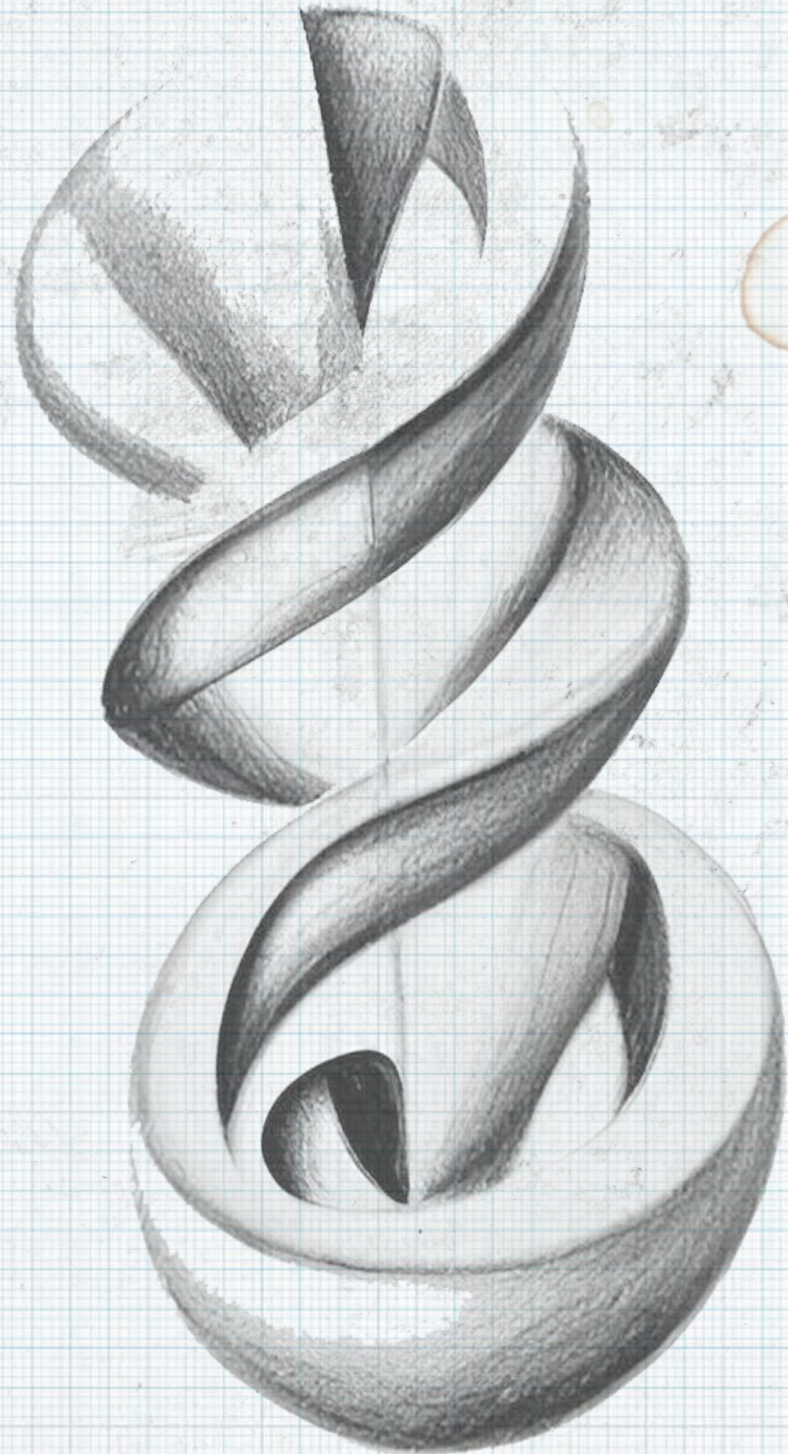


Screen two

Run from what's comfortable. Forget safety. Live where you fear to live. Destroy your reputation. Be notorious. I have tried prudent planning long enough. From now on, I'll be mad. — Rumi



Screen three



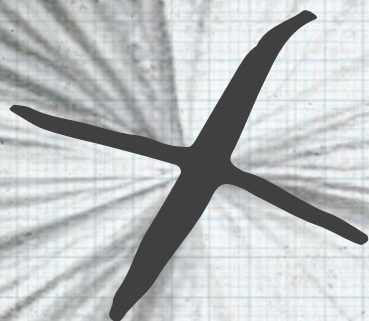
A created thing is never  
invented, and it is never  
true: it is always and  
ever itself. ←

- Federico FELLINI

Screen four

The job of the artist is always to deepen  
the mystery.

- Francis Bacon





Screen five

Let me sing to you now about  
how people turn into other  
things.

- ovid, metamorphosis



## Screen six

The Greeks had a word, *xenia*—guest friendship—a command to take care of traveling strangers, to open your door to whoever is out there, because anyone passing by, far from home, might be God. Ovid tells the story of two immortals who came to Earth in disguise to cleanse the sickened world. No one would let them in but one old couple, Baucis and Philemon. And their reward for opening their door to strangers was to live on after death as trees—an oak and a Linden—huge and gracious and intertwined. What we care for, we will grow to resemble. And what we resemble will hold us when we are no longer. . .



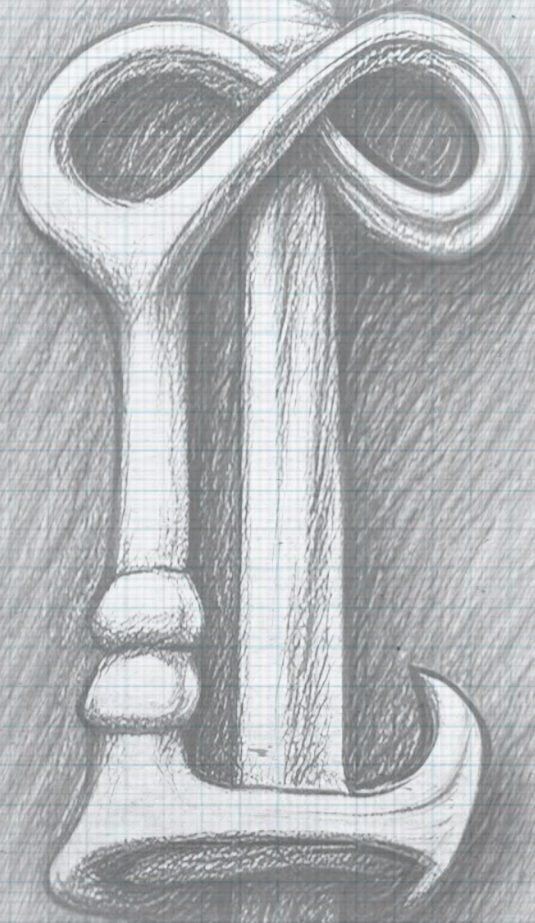
## Opening screen

A word in scratch film style quickly flashes across the screen:

CIPHAER

scratch film example - [youtu.be/e6Z13PBuEgY](https://youtu.be/e6Z13PBuEgY)

Then on-screen, we see the following message:



The prerequisite materials for understanding this movie are *Liminal* by Cameron Whiteside and *Xen: The Zen of the Other* by Ezra Buckley.

Attempts to interface with this work without a working knowledge of the required backstory may manifest severe and aberrant psychological states.

The producers of this work accept no responsibility for any psychological effects should you proceed past this point without the necessary prerequisite knowledge.

**You have been warned. Proceed at your own risk.**

Format: Video, mixed live-action, and animation

## Into the Night

We open to flashes of newsreel cuts, screenshots of newspaper clippings, audio that implies TV channels being changed and radio stations coming and going, like a dial is being spun. All the images and snatches of audio reference a serial killer, known as The Culler. The montage story being built here indicates that the killer uses a compromised dating app called **DATRR** (pronounced like Dater) to identify and stalk his potential victims. The app gives the killer intimate access to his victims' personal information and behavioral patterns. He uses this to his benefit as a predator.

We see a series of flashes and grabs of newscasters talking about the odd symbol that is always found within a block of a killing attributed to the Culler.

Close up of symbol.

A montage of newscaster-style voiceovers.

"One may say it's his calling card."

"The symbol is often accompanied by a stylized Q.R. code which leads to a website, [killerapp.online](http://killerapp.online). Each killing gets its own trophy page on this site."

"Experts are referring to these symbols as 'sigils.'"



## We see a flash of a stylized QR:

Amid a jumble of headlines scrolling text (news ticker style, audio montage, video montage), the following points are highlighted: mention is made in passing of an unnamed LAPD detective who is managing the case. There are rumors of a mad scientist-type game developer that may have had something to do with the development of the dating app. mention is made of the killer modeling themselves on a character from an abandoned Alternate/Augmented Reality game hybrid developed by an eccentric tech and game entrepreneur, the aforementioned "mad scientist." The montage closes with a grainy cellphone picture purported to be The Culler, as indicated in the lower thirds,

"The Culler caught in the act?"

The picture of the Culler is in an urban setting. The photo was taken from a distance, possibly across the street from the subject. The subject is in an alley and turning to face the camera. A spray paint can is in one of the subject's hands, while a stencil flaps in the other. The subject is tall, stocky, wearing a hoodie pulled up over his head. A mask over his face appears to be reminiscent of a Lucha libre-style mask but is highly stylized. The mask is strikingly tribal and raw. It looked ripped and primitively stitched in places.

newscaster voice over:

"There are other strange symbols found in the area of killings attributed to The Culler as the killer has come to be known. One is a Roman numeral four followed by the symbol for pi."



Close up of a symbol

IVπ

"Another is a smiley face."

Close up of whimsical, spray-painted smiley face, with paint runs:

"There is a lot of speculation but very little in the way of evidence as to the meaning of these symbols." A word in scratch film style quickly flashes across the screen:

CIPHER

Cut to a disheveled character, wearing a long trench coat, standing on a milk crate, and waving a book, the title of which is "The Secret Rituals of the Men in Black." He has a manic expression on his face, his voice is didactic and reminiscent of a fundamentalist tent revival preacher.

"These signs that he paints, they are signs of hate, signs of fear, not to be emulated, not to be replicated. Fear them. So not repeat them. These signs identify him as the..."

Fade out.



## Fade in.

We open on two people, Joseph Matheny and Adam Kadmon, riding in a classic luxury car with a bench seat. The vehicle is large and roomy, from the 70s.

The younger of the two is driving. Adam has classic California surfer good looks and is wearing a hoodie with a "Pigeons are Liars" logo on the front.

The other man is older, has a longish beard, wears a billed cap, a flannel shirt, and round, Lennon-like specs. His overall appearance gives off a Pacific Northwest vibe.

We are looking at two similar-looking men, separated by a few generations.



Motivation: The two are talking about their trip and how the journey has already happened in the past. 1982 to be exact. It is a strange conversation, and at times, the language is strained as they try to encapsulate the totality of their situation. They are on a trip that Matheny initially did alone in 1982. They are not making a similar trip but are somehow making the same trip at a different time with an additional participant, namely, Adam. Essentially, they inhabit the same experiential tunnel but in a different time-stream. Some things will be the same, while others will be distorted, like an echo.

Matheny speaks, "Last time, or I mean, this last time, but in a different time thread, I only had two dollars in my pocket. That was by design. I spent all the money I had in the bank except for two dollars, loaded up my backpack with a few clothes, a couple of cans of Campbell's soup, and off I went, in search of—something."

"Why would you do that?" Adam asks.

"I was still young enough to believe in the romanticism of poverty," Matheny replies.

He continues, "I guess it was also a test. I wanted to survive on my wits alone. I think the two dollars was so I could get a CTA back to my neighborhood if I became stuck on the edge of Chicago or maybe unconsciously, I was giving myself one last chance to change my mind."

"You didn't, I know," Adam replies, giving Matheny a meaningful look.

"I didn't," Matheny replies, turning to look out the passenger side window.

Adam asks, "Did you keep a journal of the trip?"

Matheny answers, "I started to, but pretty quickly I was so caught up in the experience of the journey, I let it fall by the wayside. I wrote about 20 or 30 pages before I stopped altogether. It is better to focus on living the experience rather than writing about it."

"Too bad. A journal would help us now. Did you at least have a title? That might help." Adam asks.

"I had a title in mind. I originally had some vague notion of it being published. I titled it, 'Does Anyone Have the Address to the State of the Union?' subtitled, 'Cullible Travels.'

"Ha! That is absolutely no help." Adam guffaws.

The two men are silent as the car glides down the road.

"You were, um, are, um, younger then, now. I mean—you know what I mean." Adam fumbles his way through the anti-logic of the situation.

"Yeah, the benefit of having done this before in another timeline, or whatever is going on here, is I can guide us into the probability tangles so we can bolster our chances for an outcome we desire." Matheny is looking out the window, watching the landscape slide by. It is daytime and looks to be a western American desert landscape.

"I suspect," he continues, "that you are me then since you're the same age as I was then."



"What do the numbers say?" Adam asks.

"If you torture the numbers long enough, they'll confess to whatever you want them to say." Says Matheny, a bit sarcastically.

Both men are silent for a minute while they continue to roll down the road.

You really did that in '82 or did this, I mean?" Adam asks. "Toss everything and take off without a plan or destination?"

I really did, Adam." Matheny pronounces Adam as "Ah-Dahn" with the long A Hebrew pronunciation. He continues, "Ah-Dahn, the clay that the first man was made from, the name of the first man —"

"Oh, come on," Adam interrupts Matheny's reverential, chantlike, recitation style.

"Hey," Matheny shoots back, "We need to recognize this for what it is. The ultimate liminal situation, two travelers, Sal and Deaning it down the road to somewhere from a kind of somewhere that once was but never was."

Silence again.

"This is a ritual reenactment of a trip that created an event that spawned a doorway that allowed an ancient evil to manifest—" Matheny began.

"Oh, please. Can we not?" Adam says, slicing his hand in the air like an ax. "I mean, I know that it is probably something like what we're doing, but can we not put words to it?" Adam implores desperately.

Silence again as they roll on.

Adam leans over and turns on the radio. He twirls the dial until he lands upon a radio station playing music from The Carl Stalling Project.

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAKSuy\\_kVDIf02jbl-uQdkcTgKDSVpGWRAQ0g3WD](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=OLAKSuy_kVDIf02jbl-uQdkcTgKDSVpGWRAQ0g3WD)

Above the music can be heard the voice of a woman, with a noticeable Japanese accent, reading what seems like random numbers over the music.

The music is recognizable from the collective T.V. experiences of our youth. It is the soundtrack to so many of our Saturday mornings. A woman's voice, monotone, accented, saying numbers aloud with no context.



"Daaaah, dahhh, dum, dum...."

11

"Eleven, sixteen, forty-seven, thirty-three...."

Static and feedback rises in the mix from time to time, never overpowering the complete mix but rather, giving the whole ensemble the feeling of riding on the waves of the ocean.

17

Adam starts to speak over the symphony of calm oceanic chaos. "So, the navigation trick here is, just go west."

"While holding images of the desert in your mind," Matheny replies. He leans over and turns the radio down.

47

"Anything else?" Adam asks.

"Hm. The short film HWY that Jim Morrison made." Matheny says after a short pause.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2vNX6ml3d4>

33

"And?" Adam asks, with a note of insistency in his voice.

"And —and, make sure you have never been here before. otherwise, we lose the trail. If you for a moment forget that you have never been here before, we lose the trail. only recognize the tangles, familiar places when we are not moving. That lessens our chance of taking a wrong turn. We are in a liminal realm here, a crossover of waking and dream time. Waking logic no longer applies." Matheny says in a very matter-of-fact tone.

"Roger that." Says Adam, "Clear as mud."

"OK," Matheny says, pausing to close his eyes and rub the bridge of his nose. "What's different?" Adam looks over at him with an expression of concern.

"I'm in a car, driving; I'm not hitchhiking and or hopping trains." Matheny continues. Adam looks at him again as if trying to discern something.

"Next is the vegas trip with the gambler and the comic book artist," Matheny says, looking out the windshield blankly.

"The what and the what?" Adam says.

"Then the circus." Matheny finishes, ignoring Adam altogether.

"This is an imprecise science. We are navigating by zen archery principles. This means that we are affected by mythomagnetics. Mounds and other powerful markers will affect us as we try to navigate between mythopoetic poles of attraction."

"Uh, yeah, sure. When do we start to look for him?" Adam asks.

"Well, not now, since you just mentioned it," Matheny says, looking a bit crestfallen.

"I'm sorry—" Adam begins.

"It's OK, but we have to be more undisciplined. We simply cannot intend to find him, or we never will, because he'll always know we're coming, instinctively. He has a better chance of picking up that intention by announcing it. We have to sneak up on him sideways — accidentally or purpose."

Matheny pauses for a moment and then begins again. "Cameron was the id, Ezra was the shadow, what does that make the Culler? He is seemingly more visceral, in one sense, with all that grisly murder activity, but in another sense, he has a lot of very refined, high functioning going on. He or it just does not seem to be in the right logical order sometimes, and other times when he's outsmarting us and everyone else, he seems to be the logical next step. The disconnect for me is because I'm assuming the murders result from some kind of rage. That's me needing them to be the result of some passion and not simply a cold, calculated act. But then why do it at all?"

Matheny falls silent.

"It's like the difference between the Titans and the Gods." Matheny finally says.

"Alexander Pichushkin was both a genius and a serial killer," Adam replies.

"You know, I see how this progressed. Ezra was a manifestation of some of my sentiments regarding technology and modernity. The Culler is also, in a way, a very amplified version of my feelings about humanity in general. I knew I was summoning a presence as a muse of sorts. Ezra and Cameron wrote so much of their own material it felt very pure. I wrote The Culler but then abandoned him. It was only logical that he would grow into what he is today. I wish I could go back in time and tell me in the past to be more careful."

"I was going to say that this is gonna get weird, but it already has," Adam says. He leans over and turns the radio back up, and the numbers station is still broadcasting.

"You're finally seeing the results of cultivating the eight selves within yourself." Adam adds, "If you could solve the dilemma of why, you'd not only have the answer you seek for yourself but for a lot of other people, and for a lot of cases other than this one."

Matheny looks at him for a minute and then looks back out the window.

"I mean, I, like Ezra, have sympathy for Kaczynski's point of view. Have you ever, actually, read *Industrial Society and Its Future*?" Matheny asks.

"The what?" Adam asks.

"Aka the unabomber's manifesto," Matheny replies.

"The ravings of a madman," Adam says dismissively.

"Wrong," says Matheny. "He's, in fact, very logical and very sober and not altogether wrong."

"He blew people up," Adam says flatly.

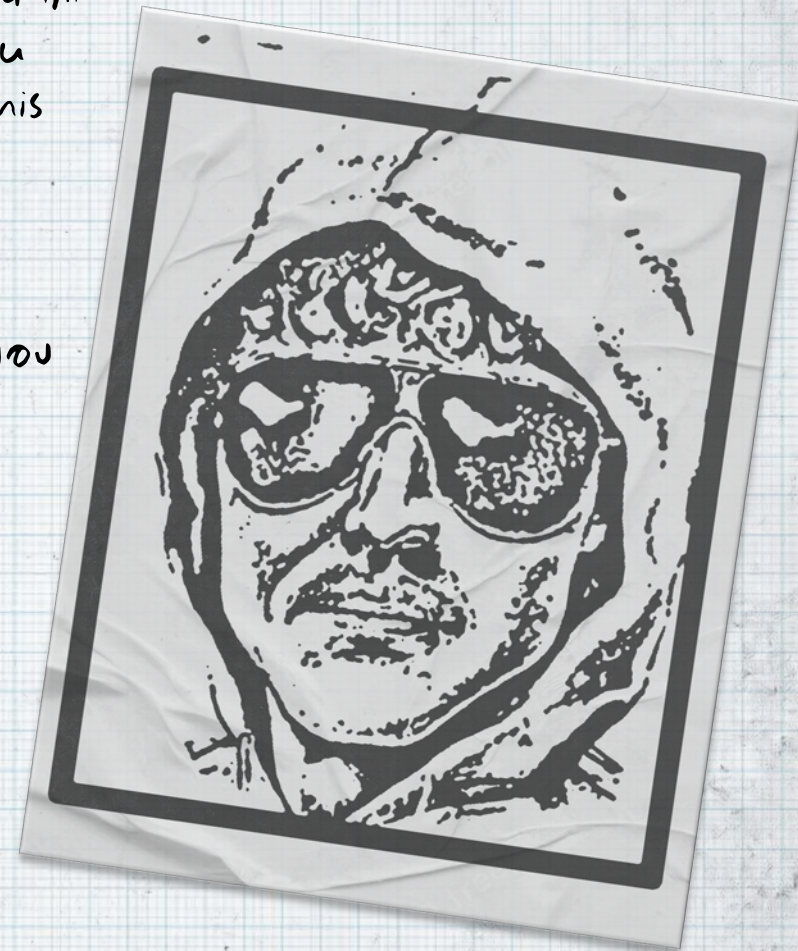
"And if he didn't, no one would have ever read his words," Matheny says, still looking out the window.

Adam sighs.

"Thanos." He mutters.

"Your Disneyfication disappoints me," Matheny replies.

They both remain silent and drive into the night.



## Format: Live action

### To catch a wraith

We open on LAPD Detective Jaqueline Harlow, pulling her holstered gun off her hip and placing it in the top right drawer of her desk.

The top of her desk is littered with various books, with multiple colored post-it notes protruding from the pages with scribbled notes partially visible on each.

We scan across the visible book titles: This is Not a Game: A Guide to Alternate Reality Gaming by Dave Szulborski, The Art of Memetics by Edward Wilson and Wes Unruh, Digital Scenography: 30 years of Experimentation and Innovation in Performance and Interactive Media (Performance and Design) by Neill o'Dwyer, The Beach Beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International by McKenzie Wark.

### TROPE WARNING

flashes across the screen scratch film style.

The squad room is buzzing with officers conducting various activities at desks and in cubicles all around. A grizzled, paunchy, buzz-cut captain motions her to come to his office from a doorway behind her. He leans on the doorframe and half-hangs forward, giving him the appearance of a boxer, mid lunge.

### STEREOTYPE WARNING

flashes across the screen scratch film style.

"Jac!" he uses the name her friends use.

She spins around in her chair and stands.

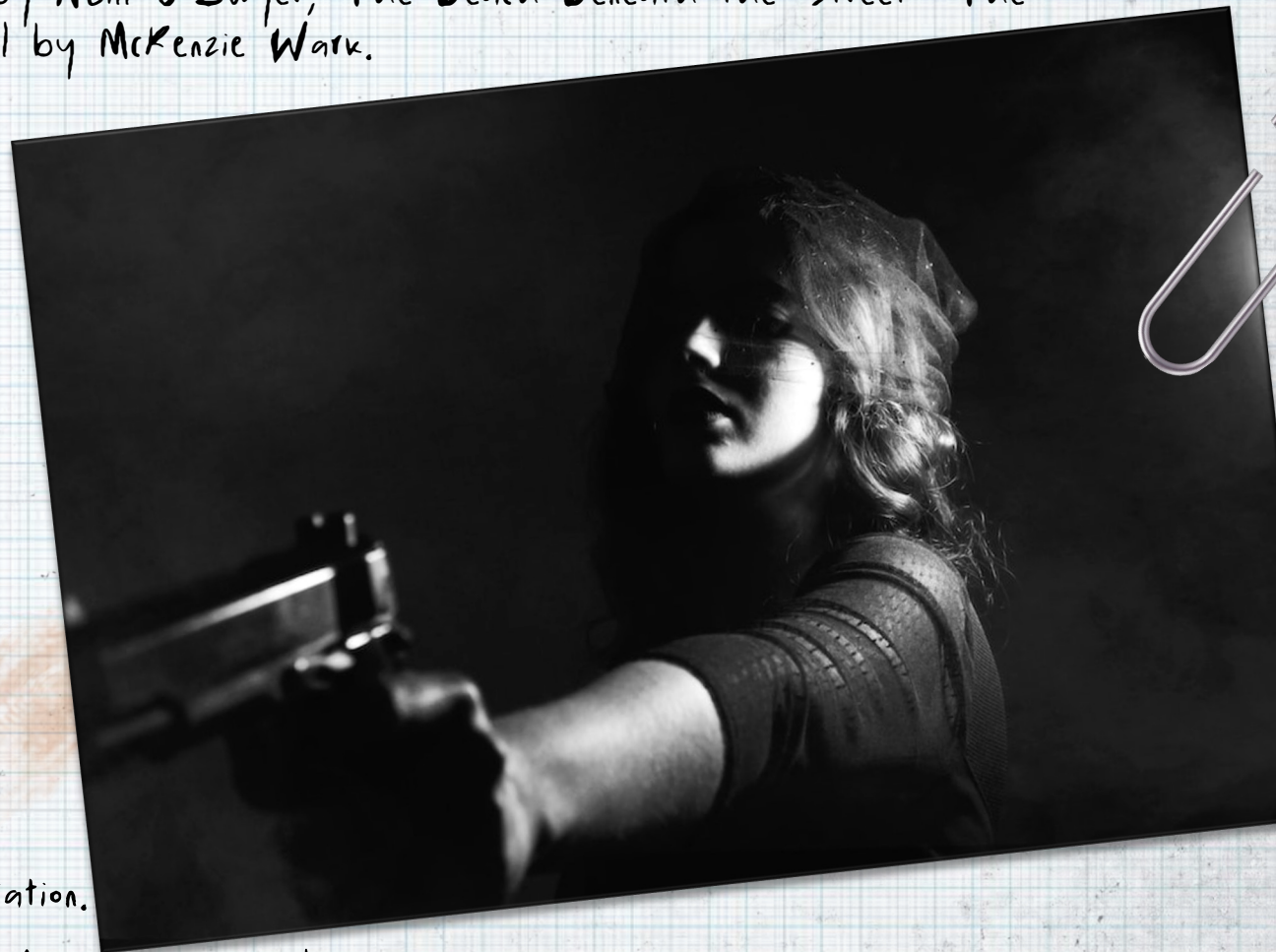
"You rang, oh benevolent Capitán," she emphasizes the Latin pronunciation.

"Get in here," he says, pushing himself back off the doorframe and turning to walk to his chair.

Jac hops up and walks briskly into his office.

"Close the door," he instructs her as she comes in, and she complies.

"Wassup, cap?" Jac asks while seating herself in one of the two ancient wood and leather chairs facing the captain's desk. The chairs are 40s era, wood, and green leather.



Captain Phil, as he is called around the squad room, is looking down at some papers, slowly shuffling them, sorting some into one pile and some another. He takes his time, and then eventually, he starts talking without looking up.

"This Culler case, anything new I should know about?" he says in a tone that feels less like a question and more like a demand. "I have one lead, not sure if it's anything," Jac responds.

"Well, don't keep me in suspense," Captain Phil says, still not looking up.

"It seems that the mobile app that this guy was using to stalk his potential victims was something he borrowed." she makes air quotes when she says borrowed.

"Don't do that," Captain Phil says grumpily, still not looking up. "I hate when people use air quotes."

"ok," Jac says, slightly smirking, "He stole some code from a game project that never launched. It was an Alternate Reality, Augmented Reality, a hybrid game commissioned by the rideshare company, Youber in 2014. It was shelved because the marketing people at Youber, in their words, considered it too graphic and controversial and, again, their words, a litigious minefield."

## The Word

### Look

flashes across the screen scratch film style followed by a QR code appearing in the top right corner. It stays long enough to be seen but will require the users to pause to scan it. QR links to:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1cNZfFIDzcZC7FUhN5goIEe03W4OqtqHj?usp=sharing>

Also, clickable URL in lower thirds.



"Where does that get us?" Captain Phil asks, still not looking up while continuing to shuffle and organize papers.

"It's an interesting start. This app was initially supposed to be used in a larger game called Killer.App and the story of that game is interesting. You won't believe—" Jac started to say.

"Try me," Captain Phil shot back, looking up at her now, if only for a second.